

Proposed Working Agreements with CNRA & Salton Sea Authority

Submitted by the Environmental Justice Campaign of Building Healthy Communities Coachella Valley

Building Healthy Communities (BHC) Environmental Justice (EJ) Members

Kounkuey Design Initiative (KDI)
California Institute for Rural Studies (CIRS)
Loma Linda University (LLU)
Sierra Club
Audubon Society
Coachella Unincorporated (CU)

This document summarizes our proposed role and recommendations to address the inclusion and robust engagement of environmental justice communities in the Salton Sea Management Program (SSMP) 10-Year and Long Range Plan in compliance with the CA Water Resources Control Board Stipulated Order. Our role and recommendations have been crafted by our work in the Eastern Coachella Valley, and are based on the current strategy of community outreach by the California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA) and the Salton Sea Authority (SSA) in the SSMP 10-Year and Long Range Plan.

Recommendations fall into the following categories:

- Role of Building Healthy Communities Coachella Valley and BHC EJ Members with SSMP 10-Year and Long Range plans and Community Engagement Committee
- SSMP Community Engagement Framework and Analysis
- SSMP Key Stakeholder Engagement Timeline
- Outreach and Engagement Recommendations and Implementation Guidelines

Background on BHC EJ Members

As members of Building Healthy Communities and on behalf of the constituencies in the communities of Coachella, Thermal, Oasis, Mecca, and North Shore, we would like to provide a series of recommendations on the Salton Sea Management Plan that could prove useful as the initial phase rolls out, but most importantly serve for the successful development of the long-range plan.

Through our past and current work in the Eastern Coachella Valley, we can assist in bridging the communication gap between SSMP and the communities living near the Salton Sea in the ECV to help inform a 10-Year and Long Range Plan that values and integrates community input and priorities.

From our deep, collective, working experience in the Eastern Coachella Valley, we understand that not all engagement is equally effective. We believe that without a more comprehensive SSMP engagement strategy, there will be a missed opportunity to be informed by on-the-ground knowledge and priorities of the people who live in the communities surrounding the Sea and who could potentially serve as strong allies and partners in the SSMP process. We are proposing a more structured approach to the regional workshops mentioned in the SSMP Phase 1: 10-yr Plan to better address community impact and community engagement. Through the scope proposed in this document, we can create tangible and sustained opportunities for the involvement of community members in the planning process as stated in the California Code section 65357.

How to achieve Participatory Engagement?
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- View the project and community engagement as one process
- Involve community members from the beginning stages in a meaningful way
- Commit to full transparency and accountability
- Create an accessible engagement process and partner with local community leaders and organizations to ensure success

Applicable Engagement Methods:

- Link key project decision-making points to community engagement
 - Offer community residents opportunities to weigh in at specific points in time
 - Clearly tie decision-making to resident input i.e., how their input was incorporated and the reasons behind why or why not.
- Ensure accessible language and technicality levels
- Meet people “where they are”
- Give the community clear parameters and goals for engagement
- Offer opportunities to engage beyond public participation

For our recommendations to be successful, BHC cannot act in isolation. Our intent is to establish a good faith partnership with the State and its consultants whereby the State agrees to participate as an equal partner in the development of advisory actions and to facilitate the desired outcomes (see point 4 below for specific requirements).

Proposed Scope

1. Create a SSMP Key Stakeholder Engagement Timeline
 - a. Assess the current SSMP process timeline and provide recommendations to engage community members at key junctions where their input can directly impact the shaping of the plan and subsequent projects at different scales
 - b. Engage committee stakeholders to gain insight into potential points of community input
2. Develop a SSMP Community Engagement Framework and Analysis
 - a. Work with CNRA SSA and other consultants to create a participatory community engagement framework guided by best practices and experience with these communities to develop a more thorough and targeted engagement process
 - b. Assess the current goals, outcomes, and strategy for engagement and provide recommendations to improve community engagement methods
 - c. Reflect communities’ priorities in the SSMP and Long Range Plan of the Salton Sea
3. Craft Outreach and Engagement Recommendations and Implementation Guidelines
 - a. Work with CNRA, SSA to understand how community priorities can feasibly be reflected and incorporated into implementable projects
 - b. Help determine context-appropriate outreach and engagement methodologies for the Long Range planning process
4. Gain assurances from CNRA and Salton Sea Authority of commitment to consider advisory recommendations in the SSMP and Long Range Plan in 2018.
 - a. This commitment would include:
 - Full cooperation and participation in the Community Engagement Analysis:
 - Be available to meet in person, via phone, exchange of emails,
 - Connect BHCCV to representatives with decision-making power at the SSMP committees, engineers at DWR and Tetra Tech
 - Share needed information to adequately assess CNRA and Salton Sea Authority plans

- Identify opportunities for community decision-making in the SSMP projects and Long Range Plan
- Create community engagement and design benefits in all Requests for Proposals that are verifiable
- Update SSMP and Long Range Plan based on our recommendations with specific engagement points and a plan for how the input will be used.

Role

BHC EJ Members will:

1. Provide feedback on SSMP outreach materials and framework, and proposed SSMP projects
 - a. Attend, via email and phone, Community Engagement Committee, 10- Year Plan Committee, Science Committee, Air Quality Committee, and Long Range Committee Meetings
 - b. Conduct a brainstorm working session with the SSA,CNRA and other consultants to help craft a feasible engagement framework

Work with Salton Sea Authority, CNRA, DWR, TetraTech ,CWB, engagement committee and consultants to assist with engagement of community members

 - c. Review language in RFPs for project implementation to ensure that adequate levels of community engagement are included and sustained engagement is valued
 - d. Identify areas where participatory budgeting within implementation may be used
 - e. Involve community members / community task force in the Long Range Planning Committee
2. Provide technical support to complete a SSMP & Long Range Community Engagement Analysis for a 4 month period with the following four outcomes:
 - Create a SSMP Key Stakeholder Engagement Timeline
 - SSMP Community Engagement Framework and Analysis
 - Participatory Engagement Recommendations
 - Metrics for measuring success of milestones
3. Provide key updates on project milestones to the Community Engagement Committee and solicit input as recommended by the State.

CURRENT ENGAGEMENT PROPOSAL TASKS*

Timeline: 4-month project

MONTH	OVERALL TASK	SCOPE ITEM
August	SSMP Community Engagement Framework	Brainstorm session with SSA, State and other consultants
October		Create participatory community engagement framework
October		Development of best practices
August	SSMP Community Engagement Analysis	Assess current goals and strategy of SSA, state and other consultants
September		Assess committee structures
October		Provide recommendations to improve community engagement
September	SSMP Key Stakeholder Engagement Timeline	Assess the current engagement process timeline
September		Analysis of key stakeholders to interview including committee members, DWR, and Tetra Tech
October		Interview key stakeholders
November		Recommendations of key areas of input for community members
September	Outreach and Engagement Recommendations and Implementation Guidelines	Work to develop ways to include community priorities in implementable projects
October		Review of RFPs for Engagement language

October		Identify potential of participatory budgeting
September-October		Create metrics for measuring success
September-October		Outreach to residents around the long-range committee membership
September		Determine context appropriate methodologies for long-range planning process
November	Final Report	Report compilation
Throughout	Meeting Attendance	CNRA/SSA
Throughout		SSMP Meetings

*At this time, BHCCV is prioritizing projects in the Coachella Valley including the North Lake proposal and Long Range Plans

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